

WASHINGTON, DC- Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez along with Congresswomen Grace Napolitano, Lucille Roybal-Allard and Diane Watson were successful in urging House conferees involved in the negotiations for the Transportation Equity Act-Legacy for Users (TEA-LU) to keep two key provisions that would improve the safety of our nation's railways. TEA-LU passed today in the U.S House of Representatives and is will go to the President's desk to be signed into law.

Congresswoman Sánchez has been especially concerned about rail safety due to several major derailments and rail accidents in the Southern California area, including last October's derailment of a Union Pacific freight train in a residential neighborhood of North Whittier that destroyed two homes and damaged twenty others.

In June, Reps. Sánchez, Napolitano, Roybal-Allard and Watson sent a joint letter to key House and Senate negotiators on the TEA-LU bill urging that they include two key rail safety provisions. The final legislation, passed tonight in the House includes both provisions. 1) Provision sponsored by Senator Byron Dorgan (ND) requiring more frequent inspection of "joint bars" by the FRA. This provision largely mirrors the safety recommendations that the NTSB issued in its recent report to improve rail safety. 2) Provision sponsored by California Senator Barbara Boxer that will fund a study that directs the Secretary of Transportation to study the impact of grade crossings on accidents. It also examines the ability of emergency responders to perform public safety and security duties. With increased rail traffic in Southern California, the issues of grade crossing safety and delays are gaining increasing importance.

"I am very pleased that my colleagues working on the final details of the TEA-LU bill had the good judgment to maintain these important provisions to improve rail safety," said Congresswoman Sánchez.

"I want to especially thank Sen. Barbara Boxer for her role in keeping those rail safety provisions in the final bill. Safety experts and our experience from the North Whittier derailment have clearly shown us the more frequent inspection of our railways is an important step we must take for the safety of communities living close to rail lines," added Sánchez.